

# Initiatives, Reorientations and Strategic Plans in the Music Department, University of Fort Hare, South Africa: A Summary and a Visionary Reflection

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*The emphasis of the Fort Hare music programs of the 1970s and 1980s was on Western music. It was only in 1998 that Dave Dargie introduced an innovative African syllabus – one that reflected the cultural background of the students and their specific, practical way of learning – by integrating traditional African music which was collected in the field and added to course content. At that time most of the students came from rural schools and hardly had any formal music training before registering at the university. The new BMus degree program, which was introduced in 2012 in East London, still follows Dave Dargie's most fundamental ideas, namely: practical approaches and compulsory components of African music. Yet the needs, the demographic composition, and the schooling background of the student body at the department have changed since then, bringing new expectations and challenges with reference to the entrance level and career wishes of students, but also new opportunities for a young society.*

## Introduction

Talking about the challenges and opportunities of Applied Ethnomusicology at the Music Department of the previously disadvantaged black University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa is a complex endeavor, for one has to take into consideration the institution's historical and political backgrounds, its staff and students, and its past and current agendas. Furthermore, one has to deal with questions concerning the rejection and appropriation of knowledge and—in this context—the complexity of identities, whether imposed by others, self-constructed, or chosen after a process of self-referencing that uses imagined or existing ideal-types as reference points. Academics may even take on roles on the basis of expectations and prejudices stemming from the institution and, at the same time,

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they should pay attention to the local needs of communities. In the following article I will not be able to deal with this in detail, but, rather, I restrict discussion to some institutional and personal challenges, while examining opportunities, initiatives and reorientations at the Fort Hare Music Department.

## **The Wolf in the Pack – Personal Challenges and Applied Ethnomusicology**

I started working at the University of Fort Hare in 2007, and according to what I was told during the job interview, my task was basically to stabilize a Music Department, which was at risk of being closed, and to prepare it for an upcoming institutional audit.<sup>1</sup> Coming from Barcelona, where I had worked as “professor” at the musicological department of the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya since 2005, I was curious about the working environment at a South African tertiary institution—and later surprised by the disastrous infrastructural condition of the department, and the challenges I had to face from the beginning. Applied ethnomusicology was a necessity in this situation<sup>2</sup> and the Music Department became the focus of my applied work. But unlike many other applied ethnomusicologists, I did not come to South Africa with a research project or NGO that would bring me into contact with communities and their needs. I was primarily appointed at Fort Hare to do repair work. As Head of Department (HoD) I was a member of a partly international academic body; my outsider status at the Music Department very soon changed. I was a part of the “pack” when appointed. The comparison is suitable because wolves or dogs, as was explained to me by one of my colleagues, are often bitten when newly joining a pack, but after a while they become part of it and its struggle for survival. The roles<sup>3</sup> I played or was given at that time can be summarized in the following way:

- The academic and head who serves the department in achieving structural changes (students and staff used to call me “Doc”).
- The foreigner and outsider who, on the one hand, enjoys the advantage of being out of political and tribal disputes, and who therefore sometimes receives more

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1 I want to thank my colleagues who helped to save and develop the Music Department: Henry Botha; Jonathan Ncozana, Gwyneth Lloyd, Mkhululi Milisi and Lotta Matambo; Germaine Gamiet and David Manchip; Prof. Dave Dargie, Prof. Rudolph Botha and Dr. Pamela Johnson.

2 Teaching material was either outdated or non-existent, and the building was in a dangerous condition. So I did some of the glazery, carpentry and electrical work on the building myself, and tried to organize books for the students.

3 Being given multiple roles is not uncommon. People who consider themselves as insiders may even be labeled as outsiders and outsiders may become insiders. Roles may shift and be redefined. An interesting case is that of Washington Onyango-Ouma who, although doing “anthropology at home,” found himself given different identities that, as he writes, “simply stripped me of my local status and lumped me instead in the category ‘other’ at different times” (Onyango-Ouma 2006, 260). Among the identities attributed to him were in-law identity, urban/elite identity, educated identity and adult identity.

information than an insider, thereby enabling an abstract perspective of the department. Yet, on the other hand, outsiders are more sensitive or vulnerable to a latent xenophobic climate.

- The organizer and administrator who can make things happen.
- The musical performer who, through practical skills, can connect with people.

As an academic I had doubts as to whether applied work in a strange cultural context could be justified, but as HoD I was responsible for the development and design of a new Music Department. Gregory Barz's book *Singing for Life*<sup>4</sup> gave me peace of mind and provided me with some guiding principles at that time, for it spoke in favor of engagement with communities, the ethnomusicologists' responsibility, the relevance of scholarship, and an ethnomusicology that should serve people. The first symposium of the International Council of Traditional Music's Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology in 2008 in Ljubljana, Slovenia finally helped me to justify and to think over my practical work in this field. Since other contributors to this volume will elaborate on the methods and approaches of applied ethnomusicology in detail, I will only outline a few basic ideas relevant to discussion.

Sheehy, like Barz, talks about the purpose of applied ethnomusicology, which should respond to the needs of people. Four qualities of applied ethnomusicology, as mentioned in his article from 1992, explain how ethnomusicologists may assist people:

(1) developing new "frames" for musical performances, (2) "feeding back" musical models to the communities that created them, (3) providing community members access to strategic models and conservation techniques, and (4) developing broad, structural solutions to broad problems.<sup>5</sup>

According to Sheehy's model, applied ethnomusicologists advise, develop, feed back knowledge, and provide skills. Therefore they can be seen as interlocutors and coordinators. Feedback, sometimes also called "inreach," is a reminder that some ethnomusicologists bring knowledge back to the people from whom it originally came. Bess Lomax Hawes mentions inreach in connection with the Folk Arts in the Annual Report 1980 of the National Endowment for the Arts:

Our second strategy has been *feedback*. This is framing turned around, so that the arts of the people are presented back to the people who created them. A.B. Spellman calls it 'inreach' as opposed to "outreach."<sup>6</sup>

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4 Barz 2006.

5 Sheehy 1992, 330–331.

6 Lomax Hawes 1980, 89.

Svanibor Pettan proposes sub-categories, which were borrowed from applied anthropology,<sup>7</sup> to describe four directions and objectives of applied ethnomusicology.

1. Action ethnomusicology: any use of ethnomusicological knowledge for planned change by members of a local group.
2. Adjustment ethnomusicology: makes social interaction between persons who operate with different cultural codes more predictable.
3. Administrative ethnomusicology: for planned change by those who are external to a local group.
4. Advocate ethnomusicology: by the ethnomusicologist to increase the power of self-determination for a particular cultural group.<sup>8</sup>

According to Pettan, applied ethnomusicologists are scholars who assist in empowering people of local cultural groups by providing knowledge and skills. They render their services towards the goals of achieving planned change; improving social interaction; and increasing self-determination, in all of which they may be directly involved. The target groups he mentions in this context are minorities, diasporas, ethnic groups, immigrants and refugees,<sup>9</sup> while stating the ICTM Study Group on Applied Ethnomusicology's formal definition of ethnomusicology:

[a]ppplied ethnomusicology is the approach guided by principles of social responsibility, which extends the usual academic goal of broadening and deepening knowledge and understanding toward solving concrete problems and toward working both inside and beyond typical academic contexts.<sup>10</sup>

A misperception of applied ethnomusicology, criticized by Usner,<sup>11</sup> as extra-academic work that later may be discussed within academia has thus changed. One of the most prominent examples of engaged applied ethnomusicology in South Africa is Angela Impey's work with the Dukuduku in Northern KwaZulu Natal.<sup>12</sup> Drawing on Robert Chamber's Participatory Research and Action Model from the field of international development studies, Impey assisted the Dukuduku to recover and conserve indigenous knowledge. The project also improved their self-determination and contributed positively to a tourist industry in the village and to the generation of income. Today applied ethnomusicologists seem—due to the outcome of what might be called empowerment work—more emancipated

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7 Pettan's model, which is partly based on applied anthropology, is comparatively open regarding project partners or target groups. Target populations are important to applied work. Onyango-Ouma, for instance, writes about applied anthropology in Kenya: "Applied anthropologists, both local and expatriate, work with development organisations where they apply anthropological knowledge to ensure that development programmes are appropriate to target populations" (Onyango-Ouma *ibid.*).

8 Pettan 2008, 91.

9 *Ibid.*, 95–96.

10 *Ibid.*, 87.

11 Usner 2010, 88.

12 Impey 2002.

in that they talk openly about their participation in musical performances including their doubts, as in the case of Kathleen van Buren,<sup>13</sup> or about transdisciplinary approaches (e.g., Swijghuisen Reigersberg).<sup>14</sup> The common tenor of both van Buren and Swijghuisen Reigersberg, could be summarized in the following way: get in touch, be engaged, talk and explore new methods. I found both useful in my case. On the basis of my experience—which I will explain later—I also suggest that we should minimize the “gap” between music and (ethno)musicology.

In order to make the following explanations concerning the history and development of the Fort Hare Music Department more understandable, I dare to add another thought: applied ethnomusicologists deal with the future of people. In the classical sense, applied ethnomusicologists may be said to empower local people in and for a local or regional context or setting. Yet in special cases, for instance in that of applied work at a developmental<sup>15</sup> university, it might mean that the applied ethnomusicologist is tasked with empowering local people to become global players, so that, if they wish, they can also leave their local setting and work with other music cultures (whether as a researcher, through a post abroad or in new multicultural environments, through foreign exchange programs, for example). For that reason—and in line with existing frameworks—an applied ethnomusicologist may make provision for his/her students to get acquainted with modern trends (e.g., by introducing curriculum specializations in new, music-related technologies). Our aim should be to pave the way for future, fruitful dialogues globally.

## Historical Background – Challenges at Fort Hare

The main campus of the University of Fort Hare is situated at the edge of the small town of Alice, approximately 120 km west of East London in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. Two additional campuses are in East London and in Bisho (60 km west of East London). The University of Fort Hare is one of the so-called historically disadvantaged institutions and is known as the alma mater of famous African political leaders, such as Nelson Mandela, Julius Nyerere<sup>16</sup> and Robert Mugabe.<sup>17</sup> During recent years, it has made the headlines of South African newspapers several times because of its student riots and severe corruption.<sup>18</sup>

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13 Van Buren 2010.

14 Swijghuisen Reigersberg 2010.

15 This expression is occasionally used in the Senate at the University of Fort Hare. It means that the university is still to be developed in order to reach an international standard.

16 The former president of Tanzania.

17 The current president of Zimbabwe.

18 On May 14, 2015 the Daily Dispatch reported on the suspension of two Fort Hare top officials due to corruption in building tender processes (Hartle 2015) and regarding a National Student Financial Aid Scheme. As a consequence the University of Fort Hare lost the Student Representative Council (normally ANC) to the DA (Joubert 2015). The African National Congress (ANC) is currently the ruling party in South Africa and the Democratic Alliance (DA) is in the opposition.

Fort Hare started in 1916 as “South African Native College.” It was the first South African institution that did not restrict its admission to “Europeans.”<sup>19</sup> The premedical program was so successful that, between 1920 and 1925, 84 graduates completed their studies in Scotland, England and Germany. This is an impressive number keeping in mind that the student body in general was comparatively small. In 1942, for instance, Fort Hare had 220 students. A speciality of the institution was that it incorporated

a deliberate emphasis on African languages and culture, without excluding any aspect of the Western liberal arts and sciences. It also included social sciences and politics to provide a more critical approach to the study of history, for example.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, Fort Hare could be said to be an open-minded and liberal place. Yet in 1951 the National Party in South Africa tried to bring all education under the control of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development and later, in the 1960s, nationalized Fort Hare despite the protest coming from Alexander Kerr, the first principal at Lovedale College, and Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews, the head of African Studies at Fort Hare and political activist.<sup>21</sup> In 1951, the institution also changed its name to “University College of Fort Hare” and was affiliated with Rhodes University. In connection with the Bantustan politics of the 1970s – early 1980s, Fort Hare, which belonged to the homeland of Ciskei,<sup>22</sup> was given the status of a university. In this context, several new departments and degree programs were developed and implemented. The Music Department was one of them. It was founded by the former Rhodes Professor Georg Gruber in the 1970s, an Austrian who specialized in choral music, occasionally composed music, and wrote a book on tonic solfa and staff notation for teachers, composers and choir-masters.<sup>23</sup>

South Africa’s democratization in 1994<sup>24</sup> did not return Fort Hare to its former state. Mismanagement led to severe financial constraints;<sup>25</sup> meanwhile, the

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19 Lilford 2012, 195.

20 Lilford *ibid.*, 196.

21 Lilford *ibid.*, 199.

22 The development of homelands was promoted from 1950–1958, when Hendrik Vorwoerd was Minister for Native Affairs. The Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 led to the creation of “quasi-independent Bantustans” or “ethno-national states.” Ten Bantustans were established, four of which were later declared independent by the South African government. Among these were two homelands in the Eastern Cape, i.e., the Transkei (year of independence: 1976) and the Ciskei (year of independence: 1981). Homelands were meant to concentrate ethnic groups in designated areas. People from homelands could work in South Africa, but did not have the same status as South African citizens. Homelands were not economically independent from South Africa (Welsh 2000, 448–451; South African History Online 2014).

23 Gruber 1974.

24 Democratization was already being gradually prepared before 1994, the year of the first free election. Yet frequently 1994 is referred to as the beginning of the democratization, when Nelson Mandela became the first black South African president.

25 My predecessor Dave Dargie told me several times about the riots in 1997 when the university, due to the financial situation, was about to be closed.



movement of black students from formerly disadvantaged universities to previously advantaged—that is, white—universities led to a decrease in the total student number— from 6,000 in 1992 to 4,000 in 1999.<sup>26</sup> With the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor, however, the number increased again to almost 9,000 by 2007. Furthermore, like many other black universities, Fort Hare had to educate less-prepared students in large classes.<sup>27</sup> Between 1991 and 2004, only 12% of the Fine Arts students completed their studies on time whereas 37% needed two and 42% needed three additional years. With the incorporation of the former Rhodes University Campus in East London,<sup>28</sup> in 2004, a significant number of white, mixed-race and Indian students came to Fort Hare. Yet that number dropped after the incorporation. The number of white students, for instance, dropped 14% between 2006 and 2007.<sup>29</sup> The student body itself was very different, with better-prepared students from former model C schools<sup>30</sup> in East London and less-prepared students from village schools in Alice. The socio-economic background of the Alice students was severe—they came from a region with an estimated unemployment rate of 37% – 53.5% in 2006. It was also estimated that 65.2% of the households lived on incomes of less than R 1,500 per month.<sup>31</sup> Further obstacles for students included the comparatively high HIV infection rate in the Eastern Cape—around 29% in 2007—and a disastrous schooling situation. According to some newspaper reports, in 2010, 80% of the schools were dysfunctional and 80% of the teachers either under-qualified or not qualified at all.<sup>32</sup> Consequently rural and historically disadvantaged tertiary institutions in particular were, and still are, confronted with a student intake that—due to socio-economic and educational disadvantage—had insufficient preparation for studying at a university.

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26 University of Fort Hare 2008, 16.

27 Lilford *ibid.*, 200.

28 Since 1970, the year when Fort Hare obtained its university status, it hasn't been affiliated with Rhodes University any longer. In 2004, it incorporated a campus in East London, which until then, had belonged to Rhodes University.

29 University of Fort Hare *ibid.*, 22.

30 During apartheid, different school models were in place for each ethnic group. Model C Schools are basically previously white schools with either English or Afrikaans as the major language, which later decided to admit black students as well. The C refers to the funding model. As Jane Hofmeyr (2000, 6) explains: "In the early 1990s, during the dying days of apartheid education, the then Minister of Education, Piet Clase, under pressure to open half-empty white schools to black pupils and needing to reduce state expenditure on white education, allowed white state schools to choose one of three Models on the basis of parent vote. If a school chose Model A, it was allowed to become private with no state subsidy. A Model C school would receive state funding only for its staff and was allowed to determine its own admission policies. Most voted to admit black pupils." Even today, the quality and standard at these schools is very high.

31 R 1500 is equivalent to \$213 US in 2007 or \$99 US in 2016.

32 Bleibinger 2012, 105–106; Solomon 2010; Stander 2010.

## Development and Challenges at the Music Department

The historical development of the Music Department at Fort Hare can roughly be divided into four different phases.

First phase – building and implementation phase (1970s):

In this phase, the department was built up and modules were implemented. The degree offered was a BPed (Bachelor of Pedagogics). Gruber, who was responsible for the development and implementation of music modules for the BPed degree programme, was, as mentioned above, interested in African music; he built up a choir and wrote a manual, *From Tonic-solfa to Staff Notation*,<sup>33</sup> which aimed at teaching staff notation to students training to become teachers. The focus was on Western music.

Second phase – late apartheid phase (1980s until 1994):

This phase is, according to the University Calendars and the syllabus of the Music Department of that time, characterized by an emphasis on Western classical music.<sup>34</sup> Choral music—as I was told by my predecessor Dave Dargie—was seen as inappropriate. African music was not considered “music” at all.

Third phase – democratization and a new curriculum (1994–2007):

In the year of the first free democratic elections, Professor Dargie was appointed HoD. The challenges he faced were financial constraints and resulting staff retrenchment, fewer educated students and lack of appropriate teaching material in African music. 100% of the students were black Africans. In the years after 1994, a new curriculum in the political spirit of the time took great importance, because it could contribute to a reconciliation process after colonialism. The end of apartheid offered opportunities for new initiatives. Dargie was the right person for this task, for he could teach Xhosa music in class using knowledge and skills obtained during his research in Lumko in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>35</sup> Since the majority of the students came from villages of the Eastern Cape, indigenous music knowledge was being brought back to the ethnic groups who had created it. Therefore one can call this inreach. Students learned about Xhosa music and how to make and play indigenous instruments. Dargie made himself teaching

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33 Gruber *ibid*.

34 According to the University of Fort Hare Calendar 1982 (Edu42 – Edu45), the music syllabus concentrated on Western music theory and history, with preference given to German and Italian composers.

35 Bleibinger 2010, 40–42; Hawn 2002, 7, 118–137.



materials on Xhosa music; such materials did not exist.<sup>36</sup> In 1998, he introduced a new syllabus for the new BA degree program, which took African music and the indigenous way of teaching (i.e., learning through practical participation) into consideration. Ethnomusicologist Andrew Tracey called Dargie's the most "African" syllabus in South Africa. Even today, all Music Theory and Music History modules consist of both African and Western components, and music theory is taught in a hands-on way, by playing music. The syllabus and Dargie's teaching approach can also be seen as a contribution to the reconciliation process after the first free elections. Music of previously oppressed groups was, as in the case of advocacy ethnomusicology, finally being acknowledged,<sup>37</sup> while people's political demands and cultural backgrounds were also taken into consideration.

Figure 1. BA Syllabus 1998

	MUS: Music History (African and Western components)	MUS: Music Practical Theory (African and Western components)	MUC: Choral Music	MUC: Choral Music Practical (includes African songs)
Level 100	MUS 111/121	MUS 112/122	MUC 111/121	MUC 112/122
Level 200	MUS 211/221	MUS 212/222	MUC 211/221	MUC 212/222
Level 300	MUS 311/321	MUS 312/322	MUC 311/321	MUC 312/322

#### Fourth Phase: Re-consolidation, extension and internationalization (2007–)

The challenges in 2007 were, to a certain extent, similar to those that Professor Dargie faced, one difference being that departments were additionally expected to raise their academic standard and to internationalize.

The university's mission from 2009, for instance, reads:

The mission of the University is to provide high quality education of international standards contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant, and applying that knowledge to the scientific, technological and socio-economic development of our nation and the wider world.<sup>38</sup>

Fort Hare's mission corresponds to national requirements, as outlined in the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework, HEQSF.<sup>39</sup>

In order to achieve the goal of raising the academic standards and internationalizing, lecturers at Fort Hare were encouraged to attend courses offered by the university's Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC), intended to familiarize

36 In addition to publishing a comprehensive book on Xhosa music, Dargie published articles, CDs, booklets, and manuals on indigenous instruments and music, Ntsikana the Xhosa prophet, and indigenous church music, to mention just a few outputs (Dargie 1982, 1983, 1988 and 1998).

37 See also Bleibinger *ibid.*, 43–44.

38 University of Fort Hare 2009, 2.

39 SAQA 2013 and The Council of Higher Education 2015.

them with principles of quality assurance and international trends in teaching and learning. Yet, at the same time, the specific background and learning attitude of our students had to be taken into consideration.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, the music student intake was constantly controlled and reduced by faculty administrators, which led to there being more staff than students. In 2009, for instance, we had an intake limit of 5 students. Four of them were sent to us by the faculty office and none had any musical experience. The only way to survive in this situation of numerous challenges was to learn to achieve more with less and to move forward. Part-time staff members were appointed to guarantee appropriate lectures. Contact with the communities was used to make us known to people and to bring our students into touch with Xhosa music. A new BMus degree was discussed and designed for East London in order to increase student numbers again.<sup>41</sup>

The challenging situation in Alice invited community engagement, which consisted basically of lectures, workshops, performances and research.<sup>42</sup> In order to give our students first-hand information about indigenous music we also invited groups, like the famous Ngqoko group, into the classroom. This allowed our students to engage directly with culture-bearers. Indigenous knowledge from the villages was communicated to the younger generation—most of them from villages—at the Music Department. It was on the occasion of a concert given by the Ngqoko group that I became aware of my own—maybe challenging—position and roles. As mentioned before, I was appointed by the university to conserve and develop the department. I had the roles of an academic, a teacher-provider of skills and knowledge, and, as HoD, an administrator. Looking back on that time, I would describe my work as *administrative ethnomusicology*, because my duty as culturally external person was to plan and bring change to a local group. As an outsider with a cultural and educational background different from that of the majority in the department, I was given multiple identities, which were mostly seen in a positive way. The following incident reminded me of my status as foreigner and it taught me about the strong authority held by local South African culture-bearers. Although my practical drum making workshops were appreciated by South African senior

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40 Approaches concerning peer learning, assessment methods and quality assurance, as outlined by Boud (2003), Cohen and Sampson (1999), Luckett and Sutherland (2000), Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006) and SAQA (2001), to mention just a few, were applied in class since 2011. At the same time, staff discussed about and based teaching on experiences with students in Alice, e.g., that some students who came from a choir tradition preferred learning in groups or that African music theory needed to be taught via performing.

41 First discussions on this matter took place in September 2007.

42 Jonathan Ncozana trained marimba bands in Alice and Hogsback, and we both taught for a while in a high school in Alice. At the university, Mr. Ncozana taught bow-making; I introduced drum-making in our Music honours program. At that time, we were conducting field research in the region north of Queenstown. Like David Dargie, Mr. Ncozana later used the research findings in class. Although our community engagement often took place in the institutional setting of schools, it was not restricted to those. In 2009 and 2010, I was invited by Dr. Norma Van Niekerk to hold drum making workshops in an NGO, the HIV Hope project in Hogsback, in order to teach skills to participants that would help them to generate income. Although the project no longer exists, the group of participants, as I was told in July 2014, still produces and sells drums to individuals and traditional healers in surrounding communities as well as churches and schools.

students and students from South Africa's neighboring countries, on one occasion an instrument was defined as an alien intruder by a colleague in front of younger students from the Eastern Cape. Yet any negative perception of the instrument in the university group changed a few days later when the Ngqoko group performed a concert at Fort Hare and, seeing the *ngoma*, requested to use this "beautiful *igubu*" during the performance. The authority of the Ngqoko group as culture-bearers, which was higher than that of the staff member who had made the comment, led to an immediate appropriation of the East African drum, renamed *igubu*. From that moment the drum was accepted by everybody. Additionally, the appropriation of the instrument by a local cultural authority also had a positive impact on students' perceptions of me as a teacher, and positively affected my relationship with the younger students.

Yet the main challenges of that time were the instability of the department in Alice caused by the faculty; infrastructural problems; and the educational and socio-cultural backgrounds of our students. The development of a new BMus degree program seemed to be a chance to stabilize the department and to offer our students more career possibilities as performers and researchers. After comparison with curricula of other institutions and discussions with students a general BMus with specializations in performance and musicology/ethnomusicology was developed and finally implemented in 2012. Due to the staffing situation<sup>43</sup> at the Music Department, the new degree program was still limited in terms of the specializations offered, but since it was a general BMus, future amendments were possible.

The new BMus degree program allowed us to extend the department to East London. It brought more stability, but also new challenges and opportunities. Until 2012, 100% of our students were black Africans. In 2013, we had one white student for the first time. In 2014, the new student intake in East London consisted of 12 black students, one mixed-race student and three white students. Almost half of the students in East London come from former model C schools. This means that we have to deal with extreme gaps with reference to the music knowledge and standards among our students. Students from better schools, for instance, enter the university with grade-8 music theory<sup>44</sup> knowledge whereas students from rural schools have mostly no knowledge at all and need special attention. For that reason, we introduced a Basic Music Literacy Course (BML) for first year students, which is also open to outsiders who want to improve their knowledge in music theory (e.g., schoolteachers). Generally the culturally mixed setting is seen by staff and students—keeping in mind that Fort Hare started as an academically universal and non-racial institution—as an opportunity.

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43 For some time, we had to run two departments with two different degree programs, but with the same staff.

44 There are 8 different grades in the music exams in the United Kingdom. Grade 1 is beginner's level and Grade 8 equals the standard requirements for entry to a music college. At Grade 8-level music theory, students must be familiar with modes, scales, chord progressions, four-part writing in Bach style, music analysis, jazz theory and orchestral arranging.

## The Way Forward: Recent and Current Activities and Initiatives at the Music Department

The Music Department is repositioning itself at the moment. We try to conserve our roots, be open to local needs, and at the same time be aware of global developments. In this situation, music can be a useful tool for historical reflection, and function as a mind-opener and bridge-builder.

In the spirit of Fort Hare and Dargie's syllabus, the music theory and music history modules in our BMus program still consist of African and Western components. Xhosa music is taught in class and our students learn to play musical bows. One could describe this as *adjustment ethnomusicology*, because our students still learn about indigenous music of the region, but at the same time they also get exposed to other cultures. Keeping in mind our new poly-cultural student body and xenophobic attacks in the country in 2008 and 2015,<sup>45</sup> building cultural bridges via music and promoting transcultural thinking appears to be more necessary than ever.<sup>46</sup> Bridge-building<sup>47</sup> at the Music Department is mostly done through performances and international events: Jonathan Ncozana, for instance, teaches also songs from South Africa's neighboring countries in the department's marimba band and David Manchip incorporates traditional South African music in arrangements he writes for the department's Jazz Ensemble. An evaluation after Ncozana's pan-African music experiment showed that students became, on the one hand, more interested in original Xhosa music and, on the other, in music from other African countries. Recognizing musical similarities between different music cultures made students more open-minded. At the same time, they could experience their own individuality by learning and performing improvisation techniques.<sup>48</sup> In 2013, students and staff participated in an indigenous opera, composed by Mkhululi Milisi, about the Xhosa prophet Ntsikana. In the same year, our African marimba band was invited to give workshops on African indigenous music and concerts in Germany. The recognition that our students received for their performances of indigenous music, from international audiences, boosted their self-esteem and appreciation of their

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45 Xenophobic attacks in May 2008, with 62 people killed and several hundred injured, and again in 2015 prompted some other African countries to take initiative to repatriate their nationals. The victims were mostly foreigners from other African countries, but also Pakistanis. The attacks in 2015 led to several protest marches against xenophobia, for example, the University of Fort Hare organized a march against xenophobia.

46 As stated by Gabriel Tati, xenophobia at South African tertiary institutions is still one of the main reasons for foreigners to study in another country (Tati 2012, 140–141, 145–146).

47 Bridging ethnic divides in Norway is the focal point of an article by Kjell Skjellstad (2008), who argues for the use of music as a tool to prevent conflicts. He describes listening as a transformative experience and ensemble playing as key to social learning. Both aim at a bettering transcultural understanding. There are similarities between our approaches. With reference to South Africa, Anne-Marie Gray (2008) recommends the use of music in the reconciliation process of a previously polarized society because music may improve understanding and empathy among different groups.

48 Most interesting was the case of the Xhosa indigenous song "Uyolingena," for which Jonathan Ncozana arranged a version with marimbas, drums and brass. The new version incorporates traditional and modern elements and was preferred by the students (Bleibinger 2014).

traditional musics. In October 2014, soloists from the Fort Hare Music Department and the Academic Orchestra of the University of Stuttgart performed together arias and choruses from Strauss' "Die Fledermaus" in a concert in East London. All of the above-mentioned events aim at building bridges for international co-operation. They encourage appreciation of different musical cultures. Performances based on a variety of musics and musical elements from different cultures also enhance social interaction of people across different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

The Music Department still tries to transmit and keep indigenous music alive. This is an essential feature of the curriculum. But there are other local needs that must be taken into consideration too. Fort Hare students, as Leslie Bank from the Fort Hare Institute for Social and Economic Research recently stated in the *Daily Dispatch*, can no longer automatically expect to find a job in the government.<sup>49</sup> Many of students are unemployed after their studies. Therefore they need programs that make them more competitive in job markets.

In response to the current situation and in order to improve the employability of students in the music industry, two specializations, namely New Technologies and Arts Administration, were developed by David Manchip and Germaine Gamiet, then implemented in our BMus program in 2015. The two specializations provide students with knowledge and practical skills. They include excursions and practical components that bring them into contact with companies (potential institutions of employment). Thus, the programs respond to government expectations as outlined in the HEQSF, the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (available through the websites of SAQA, the South African Qualifications Authority, and CHE, the Council on Higher Education):

36. The HEQFS is designed to:

36.1 Be sufficiently flexible to accommodate different types of higher education institutions and enable institutions to pursue their own curriculum goals with creativity and innovation;

36.2 Facilitate the education of graduates who will contribute to the social cultural and economic development of South Africa and participate successfully in the global economy and knowledge society;

36.3 Enhance the development of a vibrant, high quality research system;

36.4 Be compatible with international qualifications frameworks in order to ensure international recognition and comparability of standards...<sup>50</sup>

Through practical components and excursions, the new BMus also incorporates WIL (Work Integrated Learning) as requested by the above-mentioned sub-framework.<sup>51</sup>

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49 For a long time, many Fort Hare students found jobs in government (Banks 2014, 15).

50 SAQA 2013, 51; The Council on Higher Education 2015, 17.

51 SAQA *ibid.*, 51; The Council on Higher Education *ibid.*, 16.



## BMus curriculum structure 2015/16 (credits added in brackets)

Level (Year)	Module combination
400	<p>Performance, Musicology/Ethnomusicology, Music and Arts Administration, Music Technology and Production</p> <p>Selection of 5 courses from MUS 401-408, MUC 401 and 402, MUA 401-403 and MTP 401-404. Three of them must be relevant for the specialization, one of them must have a strong research component, and one is an elective.</p> <p>MPI 401E Primary Instrument (52)</p> <p>MUS 401E African Philosophy of Music (26)</p> <p>MUS 402E Advanced Theory of African Music and Jazz (26)</p> <p>MUS 403E History of African or Western Music (26)</p> <p>MUS 404E History of Jazz and Popular Music (26)</p> <p>MUS 405E General History of Music (26)</p> <p>MUS 406E Field Work and Research Techniques (26)</p> <p>MUS 407E Creative Studies (26)</p> <p>MUS 408E Music Technologies (26)</p> <p>MUC 401E Advanced Choral Music (repertoire, management skills, conducting; 26 credits)</p> <p>MUC 402E Advanced Practical Music (Choral and Singing Techniques; 26 credits)</p> <p>MUA 401E Music and Arts Organisation Management (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MUA 402E Event and Festival Management in Music and the Arts (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MUA 403E Music Business Practice (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MTP 401 Recording (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MTP 402 Mixing (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MTP 403 Multimedia (26)<sup>1</sup></p> <p>MTP 404 Advanced Digital Audio (26)<sup>1</sup></p>
300	<p>MUH 311/321E Music History, Western and African (16/16)<sup>2</sup></p> <p>MUT 311/321E Music Theory, Western and African (16/16)<sup>2</sup></p> <p>MPI 311/321E Primary Instrument (to be split up in the future in vocal/instrumental technique and repertoire, credits: 32/32)</p> <p>MUA 311E Introduction to Music and Arts Administration (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MUA 312E Music and Performing Arts Management (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MUA 321E Music and Arts Marketing (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MUA 322E Community Music and Arts Partnerships and Learning (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MTP 311E Physics and Acoustics (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MTP 312E Contemporary Arrangement (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MTP 321E Synthesis (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>MTP 322E Introduction to Recording and Mixing (16)<sup>3</sup></p> <p>64 credits required in specializations, i.e., Performance, Musicology/Ethnomusicology (MUH + MUT), Music and Arts Administration, Music Technology and Production; 64 credits in electives</p>
200	<p>MUH 211/221E Music History, Western and African (16/16)</p> <p>MUT 211/221E Music Theory, Western and African (16/16)</p> <p>MPI 211/221E Primary Instrument (16/16)</p> <p>MSI 211/221E Secondary Instrument (16/16)</p> <p>All compulsory (total credits: 128)</p>
100	<p>MUH 111/121E Music History, Western and African (16/16)</p> <p>MUT 111/121E Music Theory, Western and African (16/16)</p> <p>MPI 111/121E Primary Instrument (16/16)</p> <p>MSI 111/121E Secondary Instrument (16/16)</p> <p>All compulsory (total credits: 128 whereby each module, for instance MUH 111E, is 16 credits)</p> <p>BML 111/121E Basic Music Literacy (not credit-bearing, but compulsory for students who do not pass the music theory entrance test. After passing BML, students can proceed to MUT 111/121E. BML is designed as a short course and can also be attended by people who do not study music.)</p>

1. Introduced in 2016.
2. Existing courses whose credits were reduced to accommodate MUA and MTP.
3. New modules for streams in Music and Arts Administration, and Music Technology and Production. Introduced in 2015.



## A Summary and Afterthought

As outlined above, the educational and socio-economic backgrounds of our students were among the main challenges in 2007. Additionally we had to prepare for an institutional audit and to deal with a reduced student intake. The latter reflected badly on the viability of the department. Yet the situation evoked fresh thinking about broader contexts and new opportunities. Following Dave Dargie's model of a syllabus that makes provision for local needs and cultural backgrounds, a new BMus program was developed that familiarizes students with African, Western and World Music and, at the same time, is open for amendments catering to global trends. The specializations introduced in 2015 (Music Technologies and Production, and Music and Arts Administration) responded to such trends as well as students' employability, and government policies and frameworks like the HEQSF. Whilst new challenges, such as the extreme gap that divides the musical education of new students, may require a strategic response in the form of a bridging course (e.g., BML), the now poly-cultural student body will hopefully stimulate competitiveness. At the moment, the new Music Department in East London is a nexus between rural and urban, and local and global. Students and staff perform with international guests and abroad, plus some global networks are being established. Yet we are only at the beginning.

Recently, I have been asked why or how the Music Department has developed in such a way. The question, in fact, invites reflection. I have already touched on most of the historical, socio-economic, and structural influences. Yet one of the most important aspects has so far been left out: the type of communication on-the-ground, through which the new department was imagined for the first time and finally designed, which led to an environment conducive to creative thinking.

We all have to act on different levels, for example on political and interpersonal levels. In terms of the political level (conflict- or interest-) parties have to negotiate—and to a certain extent defend—standpoints and the conditions on which bases they want to work, cooperate or develop something. These parties tolerate, that is, accept, the others, but at the same time they draw lines or boundaries, which in the course of negotiations or afterwards may become inflexible. Negotiation has its value in political contexts and in management. More important for the development of the Music Department was the interpersonal level, where the groundwork for the new program was done. Negotiation would be an insufficient or even inappropriate word to describe the type of communication that we had on this level. According to my experience of the last eight years, I would define it as *playful dialogue*, in which all participants are contributors (like in an orchestra or soccer team). In a playful dialogue, otherness is not only tolerated, but appreciated and embraced, boundaries are rather fluid and the discussions are highly dynamic. Each participant is aware of his/her own strengths and those of the others and uses them to achieve a group goal or to find solutions for problems that affect the group. The strength of the group lies partly in the otherness of its members which, in the course of playful dialogue,

unleashes or releases a creativity that, in turn, leads to something new—in our case a newly oriented Music Department. Prerequisites for the success of playful dialogue are the openness, willingness and curiosity to cross cultural boundaries and to recognize transcultural features in oneself. This was mostly the case among the staff of the Music Department. Another common aspect was that they were all experienced in solo and ensemble performance in different genres, and this practical background eased our discussions across cultural boundaries.<sup>52</sup> Playful dialogue is thus a useful approach to enhancing transcultural social cohesion. Yet it may have an impact on the role of the applied ethnomusicologist, for it reduces cultural distances. The applied ethnomusicologist might even—as in my case as HoD of the department—lose his/her status as an outsider and become part of the team.

As I observed, it is sometimes unconventional strategies, skills, but also seemingly unimportant details of daily interaction (with staff and students), which can make a difference:

- Reducing cultural boundaries by recognizing common features and similarities: This happened or was achieved through musical performances and partly through comparison and discussion of similarities of musical elements in class: by comparing the medieval trope and the vocal commenting practice among the Xhosa called *ukucabela*, for example; or the Lydian mode with the Xhosa scale to explain composition / improvisation techniques and modes; or by comparing the music of different African countries. Working with concepts that are known and accessible in one's own culture may help one to understand similar concepts in other musical cultures. Seeing similarities and affinities may help one to overcome cultural boundaries in discussions (for it also demystifies the supposedly superior "other" and/or own culture).
- Old music in new contexts: Musical transcriptions from field research were used in order to create new or modern versions of old or indigenous songs. Those new versions often increased the interest in the original song and thus contributed to its conservation.

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52 The staff members of the Fort Hare Music Department, who were effectively involved in the design and implementation of the new BMus degree program, consisted of: one Xhosa male with solo and ensemble experience (voice, piano, choirs), trained in Western music and familiar with African indigenous music; one Chewa male trained in and familiar with African indigenous music and Western music and with experience in solo and ensemble performance (African instruments, piano); two white South African males with experience in solo and ensemble performance (piano, electric guitar, indigenous instruments) in different genres (including Jazz); one white South African female with experience in solo and ensemble performance (voice); one mixed-race South African male with experience in solo and ensemble performance (piano, choirs); one white female from Finland with experience in solo and ensemble performance (piano, voice); and one German white male with experience in solo and ensemble performance (brass and woodwinds). Our experiences in solo and ensemble performance not only fostered mutual respect for each other, but had positive impact on discussions concerning the curriculum design or practical solutions for problems because we spoke the same musical "language" and, equipped with similar experiences as lecturers and performers, we knew what we needed in terms of teaching approaches, learning material, venues or equipment. We had the same goal.

- Playful uses of new genres and foreign elements (e.g. instruments, rhythms) or musical pieces: When done in our African music theory modules or in joint concerts/workshops with students from abroad this helps to enhance open-mindedness and to build bridges.
- Practical skills of lecturers: In an environment in which practical music skills are vital, lecturers should be able to perform music. It is useful for teaching and learning and necessary for the relationship between students and staff.
- Positive humor: Humor at the right time can reduce stress and tension, and generate energy in discussions and work situations.

After all, a department is only as strong as the knowledge, skills, motivation and team spirit of its staff—and students.

Having worked in a poly-cultural setting, having experienced the application of the monolithic 19<sup>th</sup>-century concepts of untouchable and static culture,<sup>53</sup> and considering the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa, my vision of the Music Department is that of a place which enables future generations to build bridges. Transculturality as proposed by the philosopher Wolfgang Welsch<sup>54</sup> and the linguist and cultural scientist Arata Takeda<sup>55</sup> might be an adequate model at this stage in South Africa, because in this model, cultures are seen as hybrid, heterogeneous, open, and in constant development and endless exchange. Cultures shouldn't be seen as markers of difference, but rather they invite cross-cultural participation. This idea promotes an atmosphere of openness, which might lead to real freedom of the mind, and responsibility-driven and sustainable change. This is—I think—what applied ethnomusicology should try to consider and to achieve. Another advance in this direction is the report of The College Music Society<sup>56</sup> which—based on the three pillars of creativity, diversity, and integration—proposes work on new improviser, composer and performer-oriented curricula that takes diverse musics of the world into account in order to offer musicians skills they need in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with its global cultural influences, and also achieve greater transcultural understanding.

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53 Early anthropologists used the concept of culture in this way and some of my colleagues in South Africa. The term is problematic. In South Africa the word “culture” may even be used as substitute for “race” (see Wilson 2002, 212–213).

54 Welsch 1994/95.

55 Takeda 2010.

56 The College Music Society 2014.

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